

GOSPEL OF JOHN
THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
JOHN 1:6-8; 15-36

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Introduction

This morning I want us to look at **THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**. John the Baptist was a relative of Jesus Christ. Their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth were cousins so that would have made them cousins.

We know from Luke 1, that John the Baptist was 6 months older than Jesus.

This John (the Baptist) is mentioned or referred to some 89 times in Scripture. He is known as the “*forerunner*” of Jesus because he was “*a messenger sent in advance*” to point men to the Messiah as prophesied in: *Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

John the Baptist also said of himself in vs 23 here that he was “*the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias*” (referencing a verse found in *Isaiah 40:3*)

He came preaching before Jesus to get folks ready for Jesus and then when the opportunity presented itself, he introduced Jesus as the Messiah to his people.

Later he was imprisoned and killed for his bold preaching. John had the boldness to confront Herod when he stole his brother, Phillip's, wife, Herodias. Herodias then manipulated Herod into killing John the Baptist.

But John the Baptist's greatest endorsement came from Jesus in: *Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist:*

John's message was simple, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*” These were some dark days for Israel, spiritually, when Christ came.

There hadn't been a prophet in 400 years...God had been silent.
Their spiritual leaders had slid into tradition and many were corrupt.
Also, God's people were under wicked Roman rule.
Many had allowed themselves to be influenced negatively by the Romans.

So, in preparation for the Messiah, John the Baptist preached for them to repent!

Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Repent = to turn around. A change of mind which leads to a change of action.

Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance...

This man named John the Baptist was a man sent from God to be a witness! (*Vs 6-8, 15a*)

The word “**witness**” is used 47 times in this Gospel, and is a key concept. A **witness** is someone who tells what they have seen, heard, or experienced. A **witness** is someone who knows something, and then can share it with someone else.

The Bible says that we who are Believers are to be **witnesses**. We have seen, heard, and experienced salvation in Christ Jesus and we must share with others!

Acts 1:8 — “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

I. CONSIDER THE CONTENT OF JOHN'S WITNESS!

A. John Pointed To Jesus' Eternality! (vs. 15)

'preferred before me' = He is greater than I am...look at Him, not me.

'He was before me' doesn't mean chronological age, because Jesus born six months after him. This is a reference to His eternal nature.

This is important because Satan's primary goal is to undermine the person of Jesus Christ. Cults start when someone denies Jesus' Godhood.

Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe John's witness:

In their literature entitled “*Let God be True*”, p. 33 they say, “*Thus he [Jesus] is ranked in God's creation, being first among them...he is not the author...but after God created him, God made him his partner.*”

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This means Jesus they do not see Jesus as eternal or God!

This means that they do not believe the Scriptures!

Muslims don't believe John's witness:

I quote from the Koran: "*Verily, Jesus is as Adam in the sight of God. He created him of dust; He then said to him, BE, and he was*" (Surah 3:52)

If Jesus is as Adam, we've got a big problem!

Mormons don't believe John's witness:

Mormons try to have it both ways. They say Jesus is '*a*' God, but not '*the*' God. They claim the Bible as well as other books. And they end up in a salvation which is by good works, not by the work of Christ on the cross.

All religions cannot be equally true. They are mutually exclusive. They can't all be right. I believe John's witness.

(Advertise the tract on the tract table: "*Is One Way Okay?*")

A man is known by 5 things:

- His character-what he is.
- His conversation-what he says.
- His conduct-what he does.
- His contributions-what he gives.
- His creed-what he believes.

Apply these standards to Jesus and you quickly realize he was no ordinary man.

Jesus' character:

Jesus was flawless...He had **all** of the fruit of the Spirit **all** of the time. Who else can you say that about?

Jesus' conversation:

Luke 4:22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth...

Luke 4:32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

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Luke 4:36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

And His words have resonated for 2,000 years, changing lives.

Jesus' conduct:

Three times Pilate said in trying him, "*I find no fault in Him.*"

Jesus' contributions:

Among other things, He gave hope to the hopeless, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb and more.

What's more, He gives eternal life to all who believe on Him!

Jesus' creed:

He claimed and declared to be the eternal, pre-existent Son of God, and proved it when He rose from the dead!

John Pointed To Jesus' Eternality...

B. John Pointed To Jesus' Grace And Truth! (Vs 16-17)

Truth says we deserve hell. **Grace** says, but you're not going to get what you deserve, but rather something you don't deserve.

Truth says if you sin, you die...and the wages of sin is death. But **grace** says, I will die in your place, and take your wages for you. Jesus fulfilled both **grace and truth** by dying in our place.

ill.--a cross is two perpendicular lines which come together. This line meets this line. And Jesus' cross is where grace met truth!

When Jesus paid our sin debt, the demands of **truth** were met and satisfied, so now God is free to extend His **grace**.

v. 17 The OT 'law' was full of judgment...'do this and this and this...or die!' But **grace and truth** put an end to the law!

v. 16 '**grace for grace**' = grace on top of grace, or grace after grace after grace, like waves of the ocean coming in unceasingly. It's the manifold grace of God.

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John Pointed To Jesus' Eternality...

John Pointed To Jesus' Grace And Truth...

C. John Pointed To Jesus' Work! (Vs. 18)

Jesus came to **declare** the Heavenly Father!

In Jesus we can see God and relate to Him!

Colossians 1:14-15 – "14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

Hebrews 1:1-2 "1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..."

John 14:9 "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father..."

SO, WE'VE CONSIDERED THE CONTENT OF JOHN'S WITNESS...

II. CONSIDER THE CHARACTER OF JOHN'S WITNESS!

John the Baptist was a puzzle to the religious leaders of his day...they could not figure him out. So they asked him a series of questions.

Vs. 19 – i.e. "Who are you?"

It was obvious that John the Baptist was unusual, and had a spiritual authority about him. So, their real question was: *"Are you the Messiah we've been waiting for?"*

Vs. 20 – John the Baptist made it clear!

Vs 21 – "Are you Elijah?"

They knew from the OT that Elijah never died, but was caught up to heaven alive. The Jews expected that perhaps one day Elijah would come back. John said, *"I am not."*

"Are you that prophet?" [The one Moses prophesied about in Deuteronomy 18 which is also speaking about the Messiah] No!

Vs 22 – "Who art thou?...What sayest thou of thyself?"

Vs 23 – John the Baptist was fulfilling prophesy, just not the prophesy they were thinking. He refers them to the OT prophecies about the forerunner, which is him! Isaiah 40:3 is the prediction of John the Baptist, hundreds of years before he was born.

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Still puzzled, they ask another question:

Vs. 24-25 – The bottom line here is that they were questioning his authority to be baptizing, if he wasn't the Messiah?

Vs. 26-27, 33 – God sent John the Baptist to baptize with water, but there's a more important baptism which he could not perform. Baptism by the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost!

One day the religious leaders asked Jesus where He got HIS authority. He answered with a question:

Matthew 21:25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

John was called a voice crying in the wilderness, because not many in his day were listening. Sound familiar?

Not many believed his claims, but they were wrong.

And not many may believe our testimony of Christ, but they are wrong. But listen, we shouldn't let that cause us to be wrong by not speaking up for Christ! We need to determine to be a voice even if it is only crying in this wilderness we live in!

We can all hear what we want to hear! You can give a child instruction to clean up and they tune you out. But whisper the word candy and their ears pop up! They couldn't hear John, but it wasn't because they had no ears, but because they weren't listening.

If you came to Church to hear from God, you'll hear from Him today!

If you didn't, you won't!

Vs. 32-34 – John grew up with Jesus, just 6 months older than Him. Somehow God had revealed to John that one day he would baptize a man and the Spirit would light on Him like a dove, and that would be the Messiah, the Son of God! And he gives witness that he saw it happen!

Matthew 3:16-17 – 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

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Verse 18 calls Jesus “*the only begotten Son*” [Cf. *John. 3:16*] What is this ‘*begotten*’? Does that mean Jesus was created? How can Jesus be eternal if He was *begotten*?

Begotten = unique, one of a kind. He was only begotten in a sense of birth in that He was born on earth but conceived from His Heavenly Father.

The purpose of the Apostle John's Gospel is to prove Jesus is the Son of God.

John 20:31 – “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

Jewish Law stated that in the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses a thing is established as fact. John lays out 6 witnesses to Jesus being the Son of God.

1. Nathaniel - *1:49*
2. Peter - *John 6:69 – “And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”*
3. Blind man - *John 9:35-38 – “35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”*
4. Martha - *John 11:27 – She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*
5. Thomas - *John 20:28 – And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*
6. **John the Baptist - *1:34***

You know who else believed? The demons of hell!

Mark 3:11– And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

You can add my name to that list. I believe Jesus is the Son of God!

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A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. I know He's real! I have evidence, inward and outward!

Conclusion

John the Baptist gave witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!

John the Baptist gave witness that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God!

Vs. 29, 35-36

Israel was familiar w/ lamb sacrifices. Those lambs were brought by man TO sacrifice for that man. Jesus, however, was God's Lamb. Sent BY God to man. The OT lambs were for Israel alone, but THIS Lamb was slain for the sins of the whole world.

And it is the BLOOD of the Lamb that makes the difference. Everybody wants a 'pretty' religion today. Some criticize ours as a bloody religion... “*a slaughterhouse Gospel*” some call it.

But the life of the flesh is in the blood. And Jesus on the cross was a gruesome sight...not recognizable as a man. But His death and the shedding of His blood was necessary to take away our sin! Have you believed on Him for your salvation? If not, why not?

If you have believed on Him? What kind of a witness are you for Him?

John was a witness of Jesus! We as believers are to be witnesses of Jesus!